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Research Article

Relations between perceived social support, attachment and kindness in high school students

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Through its different components, such as compassion and prosocial behaviour, kindness contributes to healthy social relationships. Additionally, it is frequently reported in the literature that individuals who are securely attached are more likely to perceive their friends and families as having their backs. Studies examining the relationship between secure attachment, kindness, and perceived social support variables in high school students may contribute to improving their well-being levels and preventing psychopathology from developing. This study examines the relationship between perceived social support, secure attachment to parents and peers, and character strength of kindness among high school students. The study involved 676 high school students (499 females and 177 males). The correlation analysis showed that high school students' perceived levels of social support from their families, friends, and teachers, their attachment to parents and peers, and their kindness strength had a significant and positive relationship with each other. In the path analysis, it was found that students' secure attachment to parents and peers predicted perceived social support from friends, family, and teachers, either directly or indirectly. The bootstrapping process also revealed that indirect predictive relationships were significant. Finally, the study offered suggestions for future studies.

Keywords: Parent attachment; Character strength of kindness; Perceived social support; Family; Friends; Teachers

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1. Introduction

Perceived social support plays an important role in human life, especially in adolescents. Numerous studies have examined the concept of perceived social support, which acts as a protective factor for mental health, especially in adolescence (Lebacq et. al., 2019; Traş & Arslan, 2013; Wentzel, 2005). Foremost among these, studies on attachment revealed that securely attached individuals reported more perceived social support from their friends and families (Bernardon et. al. 2011). Studies have also shown that individuals' tendency to engage in prosocial behaviours, such as helping, sharing, and cooperating, is related to the amount of social support they perceive from their environment (Wentzel, 1994). Different components of kindness, such as compassion and prosocial behaviour, are similarly linked to secure attachment (Goetz & Simon-Thomas, 2017).

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In addition to secure attachment, kindness contributes to healthy social relationships (Kalpakoff, 2019).

1.1. Perceived Social Support

Perceived social support during adolescence is the primary interpersonal resource that is critical for coping with stress and is associated with psychological well-being during this sensitive period of life. Perceived social support is the degree to which an individual believes that his/her support needs are met (Procidano & Heller, 1983). In addition to providing security and protection, it allows the person to overcome the burdens s/he experiences in troubled times (Pace et. al., 2016). Perceived social support can meet the psychological needs of individuals. It can promote compliance through its direct or indirect impact on coping processes (Dilly, 2005; Ptacek, 1996). It serves as a protective factor against mental health problems (Filasteen, 2018). Identifying the antecedents of the concept of perceived social support, which is very important in coping with stress, especially during the pandemic period, may contribute to preventing the problems caused by the lack of social support in adolescence.

During adolescence, social support perceived from family and friends emerges as the strongest sources, followed by social support perceived from teachers (Rueger et. al., 2016). Individuals who perceive social support from their families experience feelings of being loved and valued. The effects of this perception of social support can also be seen in their future relationships (Tunç Omar, 2019). Those who are supported by their families develop strong personalities, develop a more positive social environment, and have better relationships with their friends and family. Due to the importance of friendships and relationships with parents in adolescents' lives, it is believed that these relationships may interact with each other (Turgut, 2015). According to Tai (2017), a child's relationship with his/her family is generalized to that with his/her friends and teachers. The motivational messages received from the teacher within the framework of perceived social support reinforce the messages that the family provides social support (Turgut, 2015).

Adolescents who can establish good relations with their teachers, families and schoolmates make more positive progress in terms of mental health, academic success, and self-confidence in social relations. Support from their families, friends, and teachers during adolescence, when it is most crucial to have family and environment support, helps students develop healthy relationships with each other (Tunç Omar, 2019). In the model created to test the relationships in the literature between these three sources of perceived social support, which have an important place in terms of psychological health, especially in adolescence, the prediction of high school students' perceived social support levels from family to friends and teachers was discussed.

1.2. Secure Attachment

Early attachment experiences are considered to be the developmental antecedents of perceived social support. According to attachment theory, individuals internalize their first interaction with their primary caregiver as internal working models that guide their social behaviours and social expectations throughout their lives (Thompson, 1999). As a result of positive internal working models, secure attachment is characterized by regular contact with an attachment figure who is consistently available and responsive to the child's needs. Using the attachment figure as a safe haven and exploration base allows the child to feel safe and secure (Aspelmeier & Kerns, 2003).

Individual differences in support seeking, support provision, and perceived support are largely caused by interactions with attachment figures (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2009). Attachment to parents, the primary attachment figure, provides adolescents with a place of refuge when they are experiencing emotional difficulties (Barsano, 2005). Peer attachment refers to the emotional bond between friends that includes trust, warmth, and sharing personal thoughts and feelings (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987). Research has shown that attachment to a parent serves as the basis for attachment to a peer (Liu & Wang, 2021). Children who have a secure attachment to their parents develop better peer attachments (Özen, 2003). In the model created to test this information in the

literature, the prediction of high school students' secure attachment levels to their parents' secure attachment levels to their friends was addressed in the model created.

Depending on their attachment style, individuals can actively structure their social context differently. Due to the difference in attachment styles, their expectations about emotions and relationships may differ (Torquati & Rafaelli, 2004). Attachment style is often conceptualised as a general orientation towards oneself and the other person in the relationship, i.e. a general trait. In addition, it can be viewed as a hierarchical network of attachment representations, some of which apply only to certain kinds of relationships or contexts (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016). A secure attachment, one of the basic attachment styles, is characterized by a balance of closeness and independence between an individual and their attachment figure (Dwiwardani et. al., 2014). Various studies have demonstrated that having secure attachment is effective on helping behaviours of adolescents (Andretta et. al., 2015; Dykas et al., 2008; Keskin & Çam, 2010; Laible et al., 2000; Markiewicz et al., 2001; McKinney, 2002; Oldfield et al., 2015; Thompson & Gullone, 2008). Based on the results of these studies, people who are insecure about their attachment are less likely to empathize with others' problems and care for them. Also, individuals with secure attachments are likely to help and support others because they observe similar behaviours in their attachment figures (Mubarique, 2016).

1.3. Kindness

Perceived social support is the feeling of being an important person in the eyes of others, being cared for and loved, being respected as a human being, and having someone who can help and listen when necessary (Eldeleklioğlu, 2006). The character strength of kindness describes the pervasive disposition to be nice to other people. Kindness involves caring, loving, compassionate, and helpful behaviour toward others (Azañedo et.al., 2012). Being compassionate and concerned about their well-being is defined as being good to them, doing good deeds and taking care of them (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). This concern for people's well-being can create opportunities to build meaningful relationships with them (Azañedo et.al., 2012).

Being kind can fulfil individuals' need for attachment and lead to greater love and acceptance by others (Layous et al., 2012; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). This caring attitude can be expressed through feelings, thoughts and actions. Kindness is therefore multifaceted and develops throughout human life. Each of the three basic components of kindness (feelings, thoughts and behaviours) can be applied to others or to the individual themselves. Kind feelings include other-oriented feelings such as sympathy, empathy and respect, or internal-oriented feelings such as feeling pride after acting in line with ideals and ethical principles, or feeling ethical guilt for doing something wrong. Kind thoughts reflect an active process of integrating and understanding the perspectives and views of others into one's own. It also reflects an active process whereby the self is able to grasp the relativity of each perspective and synthesise various perspectives, including a self-reflective component. The third component of kindness, the behavioural dimension, is mostly defined by pro-social action tendencies towards others and behaviours directed towards others. Self-directed acts of kindness are defined as self-help behaviours such as self-caring behaviours. The three components of kindness do not work in isolation from each other. They are intertwined in the development and display of kindness (Malti, 2020). Adolescents use kindness interventions in which these components are put into action to strengthen their existing connections instead of establishing new social connections (Binfet & Whitehead, 2019). It can be expected that they perceive more social support from the social relationships that they invest in strengthening through kindness.

1.4. Present Study

Comparing the definition of perceived social support with the definition of attachment suggests that perceived social support may be an observable manifestation of attachment (Blain et al., 1993). Among the concepts of social support, perceived social support is the most relevant to the internal working models presented in attachment theory (Lichtenberger, 1996). Sarason et al. (1990) view

perceived support as a consequence of internal working models of self and others constructed in infancy and equate this with secure attachment. Insecurely attached people have representations of self and others that make them prone to encode and remember instances of helping behaviour as less supportive (Sarason et al., 1990). Those who have both characteristics of secure attachment - being comfortable feeling close to others and being able to trust others - report more satisfaction with the level of social support they receive (Collins & Feeney, 2004).

Secure attachment is characterised by higher levels of attachment from both friends and family. is related to social support (Ognibene & Collins, 1998). For an adolescent with a secure parent-child relationship, a warm and supportive teacher-student relationship, a cognitive representation of this positive parent-child relationship can provide. Also, young people in unsatisfying relationships may find that caring adults may not trust or accept their progress (Sargent, 2016). Individuals with secure attachment both they establish positive relationships with their parents and teachers (Özdemir, 2012).

Kindness is related to satisfaction with social support. Promoting kindness can significantly increase an individual's relationship satisfaction. Researchers have found that kindness contributes to healthy social relationships can be found and is therefore a coherent and important character strength (Kalpakoff, 2019). According to the results of the study conducted by Noronha et al. (2019), one of the character strengths with the strongest relationship with family support perception is kindness. Positive social behaviour, which constitutes the behavioural dimension of kindness, has a strong positive relationship with later friend acceptance. This relationship is probably bidirectional, because children who feel accepted are more likely to do things for others. Children who take turns doing things for others are more likely to feel accepted by their friends. (Layous et.al., 2012). According to the study conducted by O'Connell et al. (2016), kindness is associated with social support and relationship satisfaction. For this reason, if acting with kindness produces more satisfying relationships, which in turn leads to social support levels (Kalpakoff, 2019).

In Attachment Theory, the existence of a caring behavioural system was proposed to explain people's seemingly natural capacity for empathy, compassion and care (Bowlby, 1982). These characteristics are not limited to parental behaviour. They can also be manifested in the observable tendency of children and adults to be concerned when they encounter others who are suffering or in need, and are often motivated to alleviate that suffering or to respond to the needs of others. This sub-system of caregiving within the attachment system provides a focus on the welfare of others and therefore directs attention to the distress of others rather than one's own needs. Theoretically, secure attachment style implies that the person has witnessed, experienced and benefited from the sensitive and effective care of generous attachment figures. This provides a model for the person with a secure attachment style to follow when encountering a vulnerable or needy other. In addition, individuals with secure attachment style feel more comfortable with closeness and interdependence than individuals with insecure attachment style. In this way, they can accept other people's needs for closeness, sympathy and support more easily. Positive internal working models of others, associated with secure attachment style, facilitate thinking that others deserve sympathy and support and thus compel one to care for them. Moreover, the positive internal working models of individuals with secure attachment style make them more confident in their ability to meet another person's needs while effectively regulating their own emotions (Shaver et. al., 2016).

A person's assessment of, attitudes towards, and reactions to perceived social support can shape other personality and character dimensions (for example, kindness) that may be associated with attachment (Florian et.al., 1995). Securely attached adolescents are expected to acquire the social-emotional skills necessary for empathy development more easily and develop these skills earlier than insecurely attached adolescents. Securely attached adolescents engage in more support-seeking behaviour in their relationships. To the extent that the behaviour of seeking support from their friends effectively elicits their empathetic support, their friendship can be

strengthened. The process of seeking-providing dual support can be reinforced in a virtuous cycle (Stern et al., 2021). Considering these explanations in the literature, it is thought that the character strength of kindness may mediate the prediction of perceived social support by attachment. For this reason, in the current study, the predictive status of secure attachment to parents and peers on perceived social support from family, friends and teachers through the character strength of kindness was examined in the model created. In this way, it is aimed to contribute to revealing the factors that can support secure attachment in adolescents' perceptions of social support.

The aim of this study is to reveal the relationships between perceived social support from their families, friends and teachers, secure attachment to parents and peers, and the character strength of kindness in high school students. The hypothesized model prepared according to the hypothetical structural model are listed in Figure 1.

Figure 1
The hypothesized full structural model
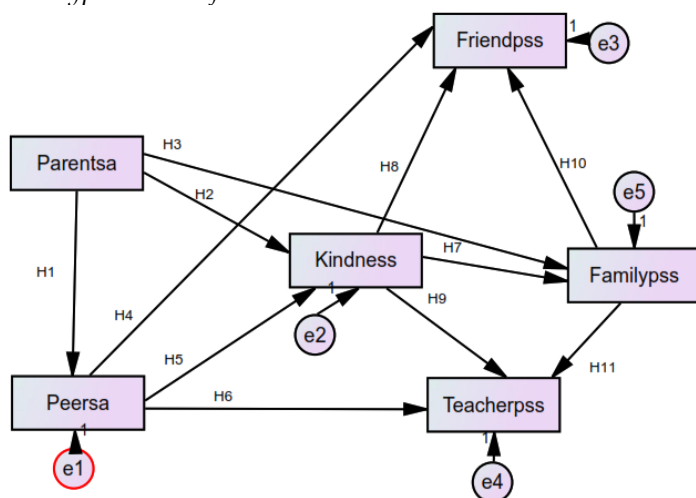
Note. Familypss= Perceived social support from the family; Friendpss= Perceived social support from friends; Teacherpss= perceived social support from teachers; Parentsa=Secure attachment to parents; Peersa= secure attachment to peers; Kindness= Character strength of kindness.

The explanation of each path in the theoretical model above is as follows:

H1: Secure attachment to parents positively and significantly predicts secure attachment to peers in high school students.

H2: High school students' secure attachment to parents positively and significantly predicts character strength of kindness.

H3: Secure attachment to parents of high school students positively and significantly predicts the level of social support they perceive from their families.

H4: High school students' secure attachment to peers positively and significantly predicts the level of social support they perceive from friends.

H5: High school students' secure attachment to peers positively and significantly predicts kindness character strengths.

H6: High school students' secure attachment to peers positively and significantly predicts the level of social support they perceive from teachers.

H7: Character strength of kindness of high school students positively and significantly predict the level of social support they perceive from their families.

H8: High school students' character strength of kindness positively and significantly predict the level of social support they perceive from friends.

H9: Character strength of kindness of high school students positively and significantly predict the level of social support they perceive from teachers.

H10: The level of social support perceived from family positively and significantly predicts the level of social support perceived from friends by high school students.

H11: The level of social support perceived by high school students from their families positively and significantly predicts the level of social support perceived by them from teachers.

H12a: High school students' character strength of kindness plays a mediating role in the relationship between secure attachment to parents and perceived social support from family.

H12b: High school students' character strength of kindness plays a mediating role in the relationship between secure attachment to peers and perceived social support from friends.

H12c: High school students' character strength of kindness plays a mediating role in the relationship between secure attachment to friends and perceived social support from teachers.

2. Method

2.1. Research Model

One type of descriptive design is the relationship research design (Heppner et al., 1992). In the analysis of relational research designs, latent variables should be considered as well as observed variables (Cole et al., 1987). In addition to providing valuable information about the relationship between two variables, studies using latent variables provide better predictions than correlational relationships (Heppner et al., 1992). A mediation effect is one of two research methods that researchers can use to understand more complicated relationships between variables (Frazier et al., 2004). Statistical analyses of mediation effect models are performed by structural equation models (Heppner et al., 1992), whether they are based on the path analysis method involving observed variables or on the simultaneous examination of latent and observed variables. This descriptive study examined relationships between perceived social support levels, secure attachment to parents and peers, and character strength of kindness within the context of simple relational designs. Path analysis was used to make a mediation effect model that examined the relationships between the related variables more deeply. Observed variables, such as perceived social support, secure attachment to parents and peers, and character strength of kindness, were defined through path analysis. Using the path analysis, direct relationships were analysed between the variables. Furthermore, bootstrapping was used to test the significance of indirect prediction relationships.

2.2. Participants and Data Collection Process

In simple random sampling, which is preferred to obtain a highly representative sample of a population of interest, especially if the sample is large, each member of the population has an equal and independent chance of being selected for the study group (Fraenkel et al., 2021). Students from twelve Anatolian high schools were selected by simple random sampling method from three central districts of the province where the study was conducted. Participants in this study were randomly selected high school students who entered and filled out the research link. The research group consisted of 676 high school students (499 females and 177 males). Due to the fact that the data were collected from an online platform, there was no missing data. Participants ranged in age from 15 to 18 (M=1.69, SD=.80). An institutional research ethics board approved the study (see Table 1).

Data collection with the online scale form began on April 5, 2021, and ended on June 18, 2021. As stated in the Declaration of Helsinki, all procedures used in this study adhered to its principles. Moreover, the Ministry of National Education granted ethical approval for the scale to be applied to high school students on March 5, 2021. During the Coronavirus pandemic, the scales were administered online to students. To ensure a strong online application, a volunteer 10th grade student examined the pre-application questions on the online platform. Questions such as the clarity of the questions and the estimated time for completing the online application were discussed. A pilot application was also conducted online with high school students from different provinces. Providing feedback on online links and repetitive items helped finalize the format for the online scale. Those students whose parents have given permission to apply

Table 1
Descriptive statistics for participants

	n	%	M	SD
Gender				
Female	499	74	1.26	0.44
Male	177	26		
Age				
15	338	50	1.69	0.80
16	225	33.3		
17	97	14.3		
18	16	2.4		
Grade level				
9th grade	288	42.6	1.79	0.84
10th grade	274	40.5		
11th grade	80	11.8		
12th grade	34	5		

can begin filling out the scales after they select the "I want to participate voluntarily" option in the online scale application. In high schools where permission was obtained, the online scale forms were shared with the school principals and school counsellors with the results from these interviews. Information about the simultaneous and online application of the three scales and parent-informed consent forms were also presented to school principals and school counsellors. School principals or school counsellors shared the link for the application via the Educational Information Network and social media.

2.3. Data Collection Tools

Demographic information was obtained using the Demographic Information Form, and perceived levels of social support were determined using the Perceived Social Support Scale-R. The Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment-Revised Form was used to assess secure attachment to parents and friends, and the Values in Action Inventory of Character Strengths for Youth was used to assess character strength of kindness.

2.3.1. Demographic information form

Participants in the study were asked questions about their age, gender, and grade level on this form developed by the researchers.

2.3.2. Perceived Social Support Scale-R

This scale was developed by Yıldırım (1997) to evaluate individuals' perceptions of social support. The revision of the scale was made by Yıldırım in 2004. The 50-item scale is scored using a three-point Likert-type rating response pattern (1- Not suitable for me, 2- Partially suits me, 3- Suitable for me). The scale has three subscales: family support, friend support, and teacher support. It measures family support with twenty items, friend support with thirteen items, and teacher support with seventeen items (Yıldırım, 2004). To test the validity of the scale, the KMO coefficient for the whole scale was .933 and Bartlet's test was significant. The KMO coefficient in the subscales was between .935 and .950, and Bartlet's test was significant. Beck Depression Inventory and Everyday Distress Scale were used to test the convergent validity of the scale, and significant correlations were found in the predicted direction. For the whole scale, the internal consistency coefficient was 0.91, while it was 0.83 for family support, 0.77 for friend support, and 0.83 for teacher support. Test-retest reliability for the whole scale was 0.93, 0.81 for family, 0.81 for friend, and 0.86 for teacher support (Eşkisu, 2009). This study calculated the internal consistency coefficients for the Perceived Social Support Scale-R as 0.95 for family support, 0.92 for friend support, and 0.95 for teacher support. A high score in a sub-dimension indicates that the individual perceives high levels of social support from that type of sub-dimension.

2.3.3. *Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment-Revised Form*

The inventory developed by Armsden and Greenberg in 1987 in order to measure attachment in middle and late adolescents consists of fifty-three items. A three-point (1- Not true at all, 2- Sometimes true, 3- Always true), Likert-type rating response pattern is used to score the items. The adaptation of the inventory to Turkish culture was carried out by Yavuz et al. (2018) on adolescents aged 15-17. There are twenty-eight items in the parent attachment scale and twenty-five items in the peer attachment scale. In the analysis conducted to examine the validity of the scale, KMO measurement was calculated as >0.8 for the parental and peer attachment scales and was found to be good. Bartlett's test result was also found to be p<0.001 and it was seen that the data were suitable for factor analysis. As a result of the factor analysis, it was determined that the inventory adapted to Turkish culture had a single-factor structure. For the internal consistency coefficients of the inventory, Cronbach's alpha coefficients of both parent and peer attachment scales were calculated as 0.89. The test-retest reliability of the inventory was measured as 0.97 and 0.95 for parent and peer attachment scales, respectively (Yavuz et al., 2018). It was found that the internal consistency coefficients of the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment-Revised Form for this study were 0.96 for parent attachment and 0.85 for peer attachment. An increase in total scores indicates secure attachment.

2.3.4. *Values in Action Inventory of Character Strengths for Youth (VIA-Youth)*

Based on the VIA character strength classification, Peterson and Seligman (2004) identified six virtues and twenty-four character strengths in individuals aged 10-17 (Park & Peterson, 2006). An adaptation to Turkish culture was conducted by Kabakçı (2013) on high school students. In the inventory, which has fifty-four reverse-scored items, the subscales of each character strength can be used separately (Kabakçı, 2013). After confirming the construct validity of the VIA Character Classification using confirmatory factor analysis, the acceptance limits of the fit indices were determined to be good based on the model data, and as a result, the VIA Character Classification was found to be a good fit for the structure. Analyses for convergent validity revealed that the 15 selected character strengths were positively related to six different values: tolerance, responsibility, peacefulness, respect, honesty, and friendship. Except for curiosity (0.64), humility (0.67) and judgment (0.68), the internal consistency coefficients of the inventory are above 0.70. Test-retest reliability coefficients were all greater than 0.70. Considering the virtue dimensions, both internal consistency coefficients obtained from the research group are >0.80 (Kabakçı et al., 2019). Within the scope of this study, only the sub-dimension of the related inventory, which evaluated the character strength of kindness, was used. In this subscale, individuals are evaluated on their character strength of kindness through nine items. On the Likert scale, three of these nine items are reverse scored (1-doesn't fit me at all, 5-it fits me completely). The internal consistency coefficient of the kindness sub-dimension in this study was 0.77. A high score obtained from each sub-dimension of the inventory indicates that the individual has the character strength evaluated by the relevant sub-dimension.

2.4. Data Analysis

As is the case with many statistical analyses, the use of path analysis is expected to meet certain assumptions of the data and its theoretical structure. Since the skewness and kurtosis coefficients of the variables range from about -2 to $+2$, it is possible to say that they exhibit a univariate normal distribution (George & Mallery, 2003). Considering the critical ratio values for the multivariate normal distribution, it is noteworthy that these values are greater than 1.96 in absolute value. These critical ratio values are normalized estimates of multivariate kurtosis, and if they are greater than 1.96 or 2 in absolute value, they violate the assumption of multivariate normal distribution (Bayram, 2016). Additionally, Kline (2005) stated that there was a problem with a kurtosis value greater than 10 in absolute value. Therefore, the assumption of multivariate normal distribution was not met. Since the data did not meet the multivariate normal distribution

assumption, the asymptotic distribution-free [ADF] estimation method, which did not require this assumption, was used. When the models were tested, and when the values related to the Mahalanobis distance was examined, no data that could be considered as extreme values were found. Missing in the data set due to data collection from the online platform no data are available. Since the VIF values were less than 10 and the tolerance values were greater than 0.2, there was no multicollinearity between the variables that might pose a problem. After making sure that the data met the statistical assumptions, Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was used to identify the relationships between high school students' perceived social support levels, secure attachment to parents and peers, and character strength of kindness. In this study, the relationships between high school students' perceived social support levels, secure attachment to parents and peers, and character strength of kindness were examined by path analysis. In this context, principally, the literature on perceived social support, attachment and character strength of kindness was examined. The findings of the studies in the relevant literature were reviewed and a theoretical model was defined by identifying the relations between the variables that were considered to be included in the model. Path analysis was chosen because it was the most suitable method for validating the theoretical model with the obtained data. The significance of each path in the model was examined through bootstrap analysis. Before the path analysis, the SPSS 25 program was used to perform the descriptive statistical analysis. The AMOS 24 program was used to perform the statistical analyses required by the path analysis. In this study, 5000 bootstrapped samples with 95% confidence intervals were used. According to Hayes (2009), when the confidence interval for an indirect effect does not contain zero, it means that there is a statistically significant mediation effect. In this study, the mediating effect of character strength of kindness has a non-zero bootstrap value between the lower and upper limits (95%) of the confidence interval.

3. Results

3.1. Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 illustrates the relationship between perceived social support levels, secure attachments to parents and peers, and character strength of kindness among high school students.

Table 2
Results on the relationships between perceived social support, secure attachment to parents and peers, and character strength of kindness

Variable	*M*	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Familypss	50.94	9.43	1					
2. Friendpss	34.98	5.19	.36**	1				
3.Teacherpss	39.39	8.85	.48**	.32**	1			
4. Parentsa	65.08	13.74	.88**	.32**	.46**	1		
5. Peersa	61.00	7.25	.40**	.86**	.36**	.39**	1	
6. Kindness	3.88	.60	.25**	.38**	.27**	.26**	.40**	1

*Note. *p* <0.05; **p* <0.01.*

The correlation coefficient between 0 and 0.30 indicates low correlation, 0.3 to 0.7 indicates moderate correlation, and 0.7 to 1.0 indicates high correlation (Ratner, 2009). Based on Table 2, it was determined that perceived social support from the family was moderately positively correlated with perceived social support from friends, perceived social support from teachers and secure attachment to peers ($r = 0.40$, $p < 0.01$), strongly positively correlated with secure attachment to parents ($r = 0.88$, $p < 0.01$) and weakly positively correlated with the character strength of kindness ($r = 0.25$, $p < 0.01$). It was found that perceived social support from friends was moderately positively correlated with perceived social support from teachers ($r = 0.32$, $p < 0.01$), secure attachment to parents ($r = 0.32$, $p < 0.01$) and character strength of kindness ($r = 0.38$, $p < 0.01$), and strongly positively correlated with secure attachment to peers ($r = 0.86$, $p < 0.01$). It was determined that perceived social support from teachers was moderately positively

correlated with secure attachment to parents ($r = 0.46$, $p < 0.01$) and secure attachment to peers ($r = 0.36$, $p < 0.01$), and weakly positively correlated with character strength of kindness ($r = 0.27$, $p < 0.01$). Regarding secure attachment to parents, it was found that there was a moderate positive relationship with secure attachment to peers ($r = 0.39$, $p < 0.01$) and a weak positive correlation with character strength of kindness ($r = 0.26$, $p < 0.01$). It was determined that secure attachment to peers had a moderately positive and significant relationship with character strength of kindness ($r = 0.40$, $p < 0.01$).

3.2. Path Analysis

Path analysis method was used to investigate whether character strength of kindness mediates the relationship between secure attachment to parents and peers and perceived social support levels. To arrive at the final model, analyses were repeated three times. The fit indices were within acceptable ranges after non-significant paths were removed from the model. Only perceived social support from family as a predictor of secure attachment to parents, character strength of kindness as a predictor of secure attachment to parents, and perceived social support from family to teacher as a predictor of perceived social support from teacher were increased. The fit indexes of the model are presented in Table 3 as a result of the analysis.

Table 3
Fit index values of the model

Fit Indices	Calculated Fit Index Values
RMSEA	0.058
χ^2/df	3.305
GFI	0.981
CFI	0.958
NFI	0.942
TLI	0.909
SRMR	0.0214

Table 3 shows that the values calculated for GFI and SRMR were within a good fit range, while CFI, RMSEA and NFI were within an acceptable fit range. Moreover, the values calculated for the χ^2/df and TLI fit indices were not within the acceptable range. These values can be interpreted as the model exhibiting an acceptable fit (Bayram, 2016) with the data obtained from the sample.

The final model is shown in Figure 2. This model tested the mediating role of character strength of kindness in the relationship between secure attachment to parents and peers, and perceived social support.

Figure 2
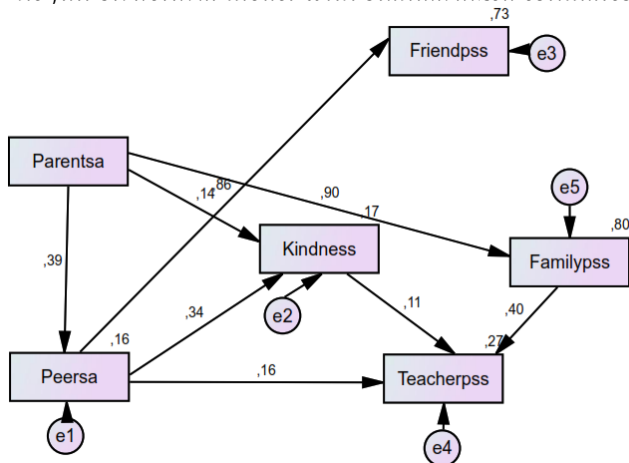*The full structural model with standardized estimates*

Table 4 shows the significance status of the path coefficients defined between the variables. Table 5 presents the total effect, direct effect, and indirect effect between the variables.

Table 4
Non-standardized and standardized regression coefficients of the model parameters and hypothesis test results

Hypotheses	Pathways	RW	SE	SRW	Hypothesis Conclusion
H1	Parentsa → Peersa	0.20*	0.02	0.39	Supported
H2	Parentsa → Kindness	0.01*	0.00	0.14	Supported
H3	Parentsa→ Familypss	0.61*	0.01	0.90	Supported
H4	Peersa → Friendpss	0.03*	0.00	0.34	Supported
H5	Peersa → Kindness	0.60*	0.02	0.86	Supported
H6	Peersa → Teacherpss	0.20*	0.05	0.16	Supported
H9	Kindness → Teacherpss	1.66*	0.54	0.11	Supported
H11	Familypss → Teacherpss	0.38*	0.04	0.40	Supported

*Note. *p ≤ 0.05.*

Table 5
Direct, indirect and total effects in mediation models

Estimated Variables	Predictive variables	Direct Standardized Regression Coefficients	95 % CI Lower Bound	95 % CI Upper Bound	Indirect Standardized Regression Coefficients	95 % CI Lower Bound	95 % CI Upper Bound	Total Standardized Regression Coefficients	95 % CI Lower Bound	95 % CI Upper Bound
Peersa (R^2=0.16)	Parentsa	0.39**	0.32	0.48	-	-	-	0.39**	0.32	0.48
Familypss (R^2=0.80)	Parentsa	0.90***	0.88	0.91	-	-	-	0.90***	0.88	0.91
Kindness (R^2=0.17)	Parentsa	0.14***	0.05	0.23	0.14***	0.09	0.18	0.27***	0.19	0.36
	Peersa	0.34***	0.25	0.42	-	-	-	0.34***	0.25	0.42
Friendpss (R^2=0.73)	Parentsa	-	-	-	0.34***	0.27	0.42	0.34***	0.27	0.42
	Peersa	0.86***	0.82	0.89	-	-	-	0.86***	0.82	0.87
Teacherpss (R^2=0.27)	Parentsa	-	-	-	0.45***	0.36	0.52	0.45***	0.36	0.52
	Peersa	0.16**	0.07	0.25	0.04***	0.01	0.07	0.19**	0.11	0.28
	Familypss	0.40**	0.31	0.49	-	-	-	0.40**	0.31	0.49
	Kindness	0.11***	0.04	0.19	-	-	-	0.11***	0.04	0.19

*Note. *p < 0.001 **p < 0.01 *** p < 0.05, 5000 bootstrap.*

In terms of hypothesis H1, the effects of secure attachment to parents on secure attachment to peers (β = 0.40, p ≤ 0.05) was statistically significant. As is illustrated in Table 5, secure attachment to parents, which predicted the perceived social support level from the family, could explain 80% of the variance in this variable. Secure attachment to parents directly predicted the level of perceived social support from the family, and its predictive effect was statistically significant. The total predictive effect of secure attachment to parents on the level of perceived social support from the family had a high level of effect (β = 0.90, p < 0.05) in terms of effect size.

As shown in Table 4, the effects of secure attachment to parents on character strength of kindness (β = 0.14, p ≤ 0.05) and the effects of secure attachment to peers on character strength of kindness were statistically significant (H2 and H5). It is clear those secure attachment to parents and secure attachment to peers, which predicted the character strength of kindness, explained 17% of the variance in this variable. Of the variables, only secure attachment to parents predicted the character strength of kindness both directly and indirectly. When the variables were evaluated in terms of their effects on the total prediction they made, the predictive effects of all variables were statistically significant. When the total predictive effects of the variables on the character strength of kindness were analysed in terms of effect sizes, secure attachment to parents (β = 0.27, p < 0.05) secure attachment to peers (β = 0.34, p < 0.05) had moderate effects. Considering only the direct predictive effects, secure attachment to peers (β = 0.34, p < 0.05) predicted the character strength of kindness in the first place and secure attachment to parents (β = 0.14, p < 0.05) in the second place. This ranking did not change from the point of view of the total effect, which also included the indirect effects. As is clear, both direct and indirect predictive effects had a role to play in identifying the variance in the character strength of kindness.

In terms of H3, the effects of secure attachment to parents on perceived social support level from the family (β = 0.90, p ≤0.05) was statistically significant. Analyzing the findings related to hypothesis H4, the effects of secure attachment to peers on perceived social support from friends (β = 0.86, p ≤ 0.05) was statistically significant. It is observed that secure attachment to parents and secure attachment to peers, which predicted the perceived social support from friends, explained 73% of the variance in this variable. Neither of the variables predicted the level of perceived social support from friends both directly and indirectly. When the variables were evaluated in terms of their effects on the total prediction they made, the predictive effects of both variables were statistically significant. When the total predictive effects of the variables on the level of perceived social support from friends were analysed in terms of effect sizes, it was found that secure attachment to parents (β = 0.34, p < 0.05) had a moderate effect, and secure attachment to peers (β = 0.86, p < 0.05) had a high level of effect. As far as the total predictive effects are concerned, secure attachment to peers (β = 0.86, p < 0.05) predicted the level of perceived social support from friends in the first place and secure attachment to parents (β = 0.34, p < 0.05) in the second place. As is clear, both direct and indirect predictive effects played a role in identifying the variance in the level of perceived social support from friends.

In the context of H6, the effects of secure attachment to peers on perceived social support level from the teachers (β = 0.16, p ≤ 0.05) was statistically significant. Analyzing the findings related to hypothesis H9 and H11, as shown in Table 4, the effect of character strength of kindness on the level of perceived social support from teachers (β = 0.11, p ≤0.05) and the effect of the perceived social support from the family on the perceived social support from teachers (β =0.40, p ≤ 0.05).

The final model derived from the analyses carried out to test hypotheses H12a, H12b, and H12c suggests that character strength of kindness plays a partial mediating role. As illustrated in Table 5, secure attachment to parents and peers, the perceived social support level from family and the character strength of kindness, which predicted the perceived social support level from the teacher, explained 27% of the variance in this variable. Directly and indirectly, only secure attachment to peers predicted perceived social support from teachers. Based on the total predictive effects of the variables, all variables had statistically significant predictive effects. In terms of predictive effects of the variables on the level of perceived social support from the teacher, it was

found that secure attachment to parents (*β* = 0.45, *p* < 0.05), perceived social support level from family (*β* = 0.40, *p* < 0.01), secure attachment to peers (*β* = 0.19, *p* < 0.01) and character strength of kindness (*β* = 0.11, *p* < 0.05) had a moderate effect. Considering only the direct predictive effects, the level of perceived social support from the family (*β* = 0.40, *p* < 0.01) predicted the level of perceived social support from the teacher in the first place, followed by secure attachment to peers (*β* = 0.16, *p* < 0.01), and the character strength of kindness (*β* = 0.11, *p* < 0.05) in the third place. Total effects including indirect effects showed that, secure attachment to parents (*β* = 0.45, *p* < 0.05) predicted the level of perceived social support from the teacher in the first place, followed by the perceived social support level from family (*β* = 0.40, *p* < 0.01), and secure attachment to peers (*β* = 0.19, *p* < 0.01), while the character strength of kindness (*β* = 0.11, *p* < 0.05) predicted the perceived social support from the teacher in the fourth place. As is clear, both direct and indirect predictive effects played a role in identifying the variance in the level of perceived social support from the teacher.

4. Discussion

This study examined the relationships between social support perceived by high school students from their families, friends, and teachers, secure attachment to parents and peers, and character strength of kindness. Based on the theoretical model developed for this study, twelve hypotheses were tested. The path analysis confirmed all hypotheses except H7, H8 and H10. Accordingly, high school students' level of secure attachment to their parents predicts their level of secure attachment to their peers, their character strength of kindness, and the level of social support they perceive from their families in a positive and significant manner (H1, H2 and H3). High school student's secure attachment to peers predicts the level of social suport they perceive from their friends, their character strength of kindness and the level of social suport they perceive from their teachers (H4, H5 and H6). High school students' character strength of kindness predicts the level of social support they perceive from their teachers in a positive and significant manner (H9). Students' perceived social supports level from their families predicts the level of social support they perceive from their teachers (H11). In addition to H12a and H12b, only one hypothesis related to mediation was confirmed. As a result, high school students' character strength of kindness partially mediates the relationship between their secure attachment to their friends and their perception of their teachers' social support. In light of the literature, these findings are discussed in the following.

The first hypothesis of the study is that secure attachment to parents predicts secure attachment to peers in a positive and significant way. A significant positive relationship was found between secure attachment to parents and secure attachment to peers. However, increased secure attachment to parent predicts high secure attachment to peers. The finding that secure attachment to parents increases secure attachment to peers is also supported by other research findings in the literature (Raja et al., 1992; Tai, 2017; Ulaşan Özgüle, 2011; Wilkinson, 2004). As a result of the meta-analysis study conducted by Gorrese and Ruggieri (2012), it was determined that individuals who reported secure relationships with their parents tended to exhibit secure relationships with their close friends. According to Kayhan's (2019) study, as the level of secure attachment to parents increases, commitment and trust in friends also increase. Although friends are clearly important during this period, friendships do not replace family ties for the adolescent. Friendship relationships do not serve as a trade-off for relationships with parents. The secure attachment of adolescents to their parents is the basis for the development of positive internal working models. Friendship relationships, which are the most important social relationships after family relationships in adolescence, are affected by the reflection of these positive internal working models. For this reason, it can be said that the individual who experiences interest, love, and security in the family environment carries this to friendship relationships.

The strongest direct predictive power in the model was determined between secure attachment to parents and perceived social support from family. A significant positive relationship was found between secure attachment to parents and perceived social support from family. In addition, the

increase in the level of secure attachment to parents predicted the high level of social support perceived from family. The finding that secure attachment to parents increases perceived social support from family was also supported by other research findings in the literature (Chen et al., 2017; Larose et al, 1993). Studies in the literature revealed that late adolescents who reported secure attachment reported high levels of perceived social support from their families and friends (Blain et al., 1993; Tanrıkulu, 2019). Similarly, Kırcallıoğlu (2019) found that individuals with secure attachment to their parents had higher perceived social support from family and friends. Cai et al. (2017) and Santini et al. (2015) also showed that secure attachment to parents increased the perception of available support. Individuals who are securely attached to their parents think more positively than insecurely attached individuals about the social support they will receive from the family environment where they first experience the feeling of safety and trust. Individuals who are securely attached to their parents experience social support as a function of their positive internal working model. They can show more positive orientation towards their environment thanks to the positive self-model, which enables them to evaluate themselves as lovable and important, and the positive others model, which enables them to evaluate others as trustworthy and lovable. In this way, individuals with secure attachment they may receive more support from their environment. They can also evaluate their experiences in social relationships as more satisfying and more positive thanks to positive internal working models.

As a result of the analyses, it was determined that there was a significant positive relationship between high school students' level of secure attachment to parents and character strength of kindness. In addition, the increase in secure attachment to parents predicts moving kindness to the upper ranks in the ranking of character strengths. There are research findings related to the concepts of empathy, altruistic and prosocial behaviour, which are the components of kindness, which support the finding that secure attachment to parents increases the character strength of kindness (Çetin, 2015; Dykas et al., 2008; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005; Mubarique, 2016). In a study conducted with adolescents aged 12-18, it was found that those who scored higher on the secure attachment to parents criteria also reported being more empathetic and prosocial (Thompson & Gullone, 2008). McKinney (2002) found that adolescents who were securely attached to their parents participated more in voluntary altruistic activities such as caring for older adults or donating blood compared to their peers. In addition, studies of the relationship between family functioning and individual character strengths have found that there is a relationship between positive family functioning and character strengths of kindness (Noronha et al., 2019; Raimundi et al., 2016).

Similar to the finding of secure attachment to parents, the analyses revealed a significant positive relationship between high school students' secure attachment to peers and the character strength of kindness. However, the increase in secure attachment to peers predicts moving kindness to higher ranks in the ranking of character strengths. There are research findings related to the concepts of empathy, altruistic and prosocial behaviour, which are the components of kindness, which support the finding that secure attachment to peers increases the character strength of kindness (Laible et al., 2000, 2004).

A number of studies have shown similar results regarding adolescents with secure attachment styles in terms of prosocial behaviour and empathic tendencies (Andretta et al., 2015; Dykas et al., 2008; Keskin & Çam, 2010; Markiewicz et al., 2001; Oldfield et al., 2015). As a result of the literature studies, we have demonstrated the reduction of selfishness aimed at defensive self-protection by secure attachment style and the activation of the caring behaviour system, recognizing the distress of others, taking the perspective of distressed others, and engaging in altruistic behaviour to benefit them. Positive relationships with attachment figures begin with an evaluation of their sensitivity and reactivity, resulting in positive beliefs and expectations about their good qualities and intentions. Eventually, the person begins to believe that such a kind and caring person will not betray his or her trust, will not react negatively or abusively to expressions of need, and will not reject intimacy offers. A person who has such trust will be more likely to act in a pro-social manner

and become deeply involved in a relationship. It can be argued that interactions with accessible, affectionate, and loving attachment figures facilitate pro-relational behaviours that contribute to the establishment and maintenance of satisfyingly close, deeply interdependent relationships. As a result of the relationship with the attachment figure, the person might be able to empathize with the distress of others by releasing energy and attention that can be used by the caregiving system.

The second strongest direct predictive power in the model is between secure attachment to peers and perceived social support from friends. A significant positive relationship was found between secure attachment to peers and perceived social support from friends. In addition, an increase in the level of secure attachment to peers predicts a high level of social support perceived from friends (β = .86, p < .05). The finding that secure attachment to peers increases social support perceived from friends was also supported by other research findings in the literature (Bekir et al., 2018; Khodarahimi et al., 2016; Stern et al., 2021). Katmer et al. (2019) revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between secure attachment to friends and perceived social support from friends. Individuals, who start to move away from their parents, the main attachment figure in adolescence, concentrate on their circle of friends in this period. The individual at this stage begins to rely heavily on friends for security, help, and self-development. Secure attachment is realized to friends who provide the emotional support needed and offer appropriate opportunities for self-discovery and developing a deep understanding of others through safe and open communication processes. They can show a more positive orientation towards their environment thanks to the positive self-model, which enables them to evaluate themselves as lovable and important, and the positive others model, in which they evaluate others as trustworthy and lovable. For this reason, individuals who have positive internal working models thanks to secure attachment to friends can be expected to have high perceptions of social support from their friends. Thanks to their positive internal working models, these individuals may find the interactions in their circle of friends more satisfying and may be inclined to evaluate them positively.

Another finding of the study related to secure attachment to peers is related to the prediction of social support perceived from the teacher. Secure attachment to peers and perceived social support from teachers support was found to be positively significant. However, increased secure attachment to peers predicts higher levels of perceived social support from teachers. (β = .16, p < .05). Rather than research results directly related to the finding that secure attachment to peers increases perceived social support from teachers, Beshara's (2005) study on the relationship between secure attachment and perceived social support from teachers was found in the literature. According to this study, insecurely attached adolescents who were more likely to experience behavioural difficulties tended to perceive lower parental and teacher support (Beshara, 2005). The findings of other studies on secure attachment and perceived social support in the literature generally support this result (Körük, 2016; Mallinckrodt & Wei, 2005; Shahyad et al., 2011). Individuals with secure attachment to friends have positive views that they can receive support from their environment thanks to their positive internal working models. Therefore, they tend to perceive the messages from their environment more supportive. For this reason, it can be thought that they tend to perceive the relationships they establish with their teachers in the school environment as more supportive. In addition to the positive internal working models provided by secure attachment to friends, positive behaviours such as perspective-taking and empathising experienced in such friendships may also be reflected in the relationships with teachers. These positive characteristics and behaviours of the students may lead teachers to have more interaction and counselling may be contributing.

As a result of the confirmed hypothesis related to the direct prediction of character strength of kindness of high school students in the model, it was determined that it predicted the social support perceived from the teacher. A significant positive relationship was found between character strength of kindness and perceived social support from teachers. However, character strength of kindness, which ranks high in the ranking of the individual's character strengths,

predicts the social support perceived from the teacher at a high level. In parallel with this finding of the study, Layous et al. (2014) suggested that performing acts of kindness reduces the risk factors associated with mental health conditions by increasing one's well-being, as well as promoting positive views of the self and strengthening relationships. Accordingly, it can be said that performing acts of kindness can encourage new relationships or strengthen existing relationships (Layous et. al., 2014). According to the experimental study conducted by Fritz et al. (2023), it was revealed that during the intervention period, participation in both prosocial and social behaviours led the participants of the study to report an increase in feelings of closeness and intimacy with the people they care about. Individuals with character strength of kindness approach others with empathy and compassion. They try to find solutions by putting the problems of others before their own problems. They have a deep compassion and sensitivity. They reveal these aspects with their behaviours at every opportunity. Their harmonious and compassionate behaviours in the school environment can be easily noticed by their teachers. Both the favours they do for their friends and their contributions to the positive school climate may enable teachers to support them. Teachers can offer this support by showing these students who stand out with their positive social behaviours as an example to other students in the school or by sharing their positive characteristics with their families. Individuals' character strength of kindness in their relationships with their teachers may also reinforce this relationship. Students' benevolent attitudes towards themselves may cause teachers to become more willing to guide them.

As a result of the confirmed hypothesis related to the direct prediction of the level of social support perceived by high school students from their families, it was determined that it predicted the level of social support perceived from their teachers. A significant positive relationship was found between social support perceived from family and social support perceived from teacher. In addition, the increase in perceived social support from the family predicted the high level of perceived social support from the teacher. In parallel with this finding, Peker and Eroğlu (2015) found that high school students revealed that the sub-dimensions of perceived social support have statistically significant relationships with each other at a moderate level in a positive direction. This result can be explained in terms of the importance of the family in adolescent development and the ability of the family to meet the demands and psychological needs they face on a daily basis. Children who receive adequate social support from their families are self-confident individuals who do not hesitate to express themselves. In the school environment, they can establish positive relationships with their teachers thanks to these positive self-acceptance and social expectations. Families who pay more attention to providing social support to their children may frequently contact their teachers about their academic status. In the face of this caring attitude of the family, the teacher may also try to keep the dialogue with the student alive. In addition, individuals who receive sufficient social support from their families may be more prone to establish positive social interactions and evaluate their social interactions positively. Individuals with this positive approach can maintain a similar attitude in their social interactions with teachers.

The only confirmed hypothesis related to mediation is that high school students' character strength of kindness partially mediates the relationship between their secure attachment levels to peers and their perceived social support levels from their teachers. As secure attachment to peers increases, kindness ranks higher in the ranking of character strengths; more character strength of kindness increase the level of social support perceived from the teacher. According to the results of Allen and colleagues' (2007) study, the qualities of peer relationships were the determinants of attachment security even after the qualities of parent-adolescent relationships were taken into consideration. Accordingly, it can be said that different relationships are related to different aspects of adolescents' attachment security. A person with a secure attachment style can also easily perceive others not only as sources of security and support, but also as suffering people who have important needs and therefore deserve support. Individuals who are securely attached to friends can exhibit these feelings and behaviours, which include character strength of kindness, in the

friend environment. Experiencing empathic and compassionate behaviours of friends in the environment where secure attachment to friends occurs and modelling these accepted and supported behaviours may also be effective in the emergence of character strength of kindness. Given that both social and prosocial interactions bring the individual into closer contact with others and potentially increase feelings of warmth, closeness and belonging (Fritz et al., 2023), it is not surprising that they perceive more social support from their social relationships. Securely attached individuals attract the positive attention of teachers, both for the social skills that are prominent in secure attachment and for the character strength of kindness, that they bring to the school environment. A student with character can be supported more by his or her teachers, both those who have strong bonds with their friends and those who are benevolent. Teacher a student who is both harmonious in his/her friendships and who behaves in a caring and compassionate manner may try to offer support. Securely attached individuals who contribute to positive school climate through kindness character strength exhibit less problem behaviours in the school environment. This means that teachers may be more willing to offer guidance to these students.

5. Limitations

Although this study contributes to a better understanding of the antecedents of the level of social support perceived by high school students, it should be noted that there are some limitations. Firstly, this study used a simple correlational design in which a descriptive model was adopted. In this study where cross-sectional data were obtained, causal inference and generalisability were limited. Future studies should choose ways to use an experimental research model to determine the causal relationships between the variables of interest. Secondly, the fact that the sample consisted of predominantly female students, individuals studying only in Anatolian high schools and individuals residing in Bursa limited generalisability. In future studies on this subject, care should be taken to use study groups that are more evenly distributed in terms of gender, high school type and place of residence. Finally, the variables addressed in the study were limited to the measurements of self-report measurement tools. In addition, the results of the study should be handled carefully in terms of "focal method bias" due to the completion of more than one self-report instrument at a single time. In future studies where the antecedents of perceived social support will be investigated, mixed design or studies in which the information obtained through self-report measurement tools is supported by qualitative data collection methods can be organised.

6. Implications

The results of this study have some important implications for researchers working on perceived social support and educators who implement practices to increase perceived social support. The validity of the current model can be tested for different age groups. This study found that teacher-perceived social support was positively correlated with character strength of kindness. Counseling and psychoeducation can be planned with groups based on current results on school dropout intentions and positive school climates. This study focused on high school students living with their families. A similar study can be conducted with high school students living in orphanages or adopted from foster homes to test the obtained model. It was found that both a sense of family, friends, and teacher support as well as a sense of kindness were positively correlated with secure attachments to parents and peers. Attachment interventions such as "circles of safety" (Hoffman, Marvin, Cooper, & Powell, 2006) can be studied to determine if they have a positive impact on children and adolescents' character strengths of kindness and perceived social support.

The following suggestions can also be made to educators and experts in the field. The study was conducted with high school students. Although the variables used are considered important in high school students, as stated in the relevant literature, childhood plays an important role in the development of attachments and character traits. Thus, parents, educators, and administrators can create environments that improve children's secure attachment levels and character strengths,

contributing to their perceptions of social support. The concepts of self-sufficiency and awareness can help strengthen secure attachment and perceived social support (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). In addition, we agree with O'Connel et al. (2016) and Waldinger and Schulz (2016) that kindness interventions can improve and strengthen preexisting bonds. In projects that strengthen individuals' perceptions of social support, educational institutions, academics, local governments, and non-governmental organizations can work together to implement interventions that can strengthen the security of attachment to parents and peers as well as the character strength of kindness.

7. Conclusion

In this study, ideas derived from the closeness of the parent-child relationship validated not only for other close relationships, but also for all kinds of social relationships that entail concern for others' welfare. There seems to be a common basis and similarity between responsive, repetitive, and caring social interactions across the lifespan. Moreover, promoting virtues and their operative dimension, character strengths, without providing a sense of loving security, would be pointless. Understanding the developmental origins of caring for others in childhood is central not only to attachment research, but also to the goal of raising a kinder, more compassionate society. Secure attachment and kindness will promote and guarantee the positive interpersonal relationship needed to strengthen the psychological well-being of humanity, thus contributing to the upbringing of happy and prosperous generations.

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